



NJ Department of Environmental Protection
James E. McGreevey, Governor
Bradley M. Campbell, Commissioner



Division of Parks and Forestry
Office of the Director
501 East State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

LUSSCROFT WANTAGE, NEW JERSEY

a unique place

Challenge
& Vision

fate to be decided

James Turner's Lusscroft

Montclair stockbroker James Turner spent \$500,000 between 1914 and 1930 to establish Lusscroft as a model dairy farm, based on modern agricultural principles. He built his country manorhouse on Neilson Road in 1916, and enlarged it in 1928. The house overlooks a scenic patchwork of pastures, ponds, woodlots and barnyards, where farm manager Edward Decker once supervised the finest, purebred Guernsey herd in the region. In 1930, James Turner had craftsmen salvage antique timbers from 25



local barns and houses to construct the "Outlook Lodge" atop the ridge for his brother, Dr. William Turner. With a brick inglenook, this Arts-and-Crafts masterpiece of chestnut log construction offers a panoramic view of the Kittatinny Valley and Highlands.

Dairy Research Farm

To promote agricultural research and education, in

1931 James Turner donated his Lusscroft, Newbegin and Belle Ellen farms, totaling 1,050 acres in Sussex County, to the state of New Jersey. He placed no deed restrictions on the property, intending that it be used "in every expedient way toward promoting social progress and welfare." His gift included 250 head of Guernsey and Holstein cattle, horses, tractors, modern dairy buildings, employees' cottages and a complete line of farm machinery. It was one of the first dairy farms in the United States to be used for research projects. Until the farm's closure in 1970, researchers at Lusscroft brought New Jersey to the scientific forefront of grassland farming, artificial livestock breeding and production testing for a safe, healthy milk supply. In 1938, Enos J. Perry used Lusscroft sires in the first experiments with artificial insemination in the United States.

Public Meeting: Please Join Us!

We invite you to participate in the future development of Lusscroft (former 4-H camp) **July 29, 2004 at 7 p.m.** Space Farms Zoo & Museum 218 Route 519, Beemerville Sussex, NJ

Cook College Forestry Program

Cook College established a forestry program at Lusscroft in 1955, planting demonstration plots of black locust and Christmas tree varieties and teaching woodlot and fence post management. The Outlook Lodge was a summer dormitory from 1956 until the program ended in 1975.

4-H Youth Center for Outdoor Education

Rutgers University closed its Beemerville agricultural research stations in 1970, keeping only 578 acres at Lusscroft for use by the 4-H Youth Center for Outdoor Education. It opened to 900 campers in 1973 and closed in 1996 because of declining enrollment and rising maintenance expenses.

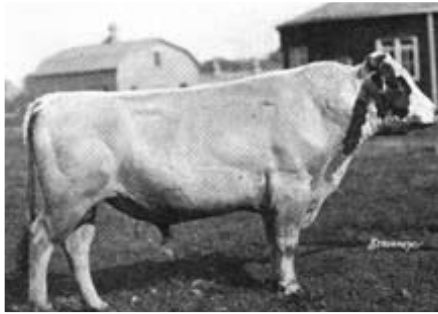
Transfer to the State Park Service

The state transferred the administration of Lusscroft from Rutgers University to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (State Park Service) and the State Agricultural Development Committee in January 2002. The transfer included 578 acres and 23 original structures built between 1914 and 1932. High Point State Park now administers Lusscroft in cooperation with the State Agriculture Development Committee.

What Will the Final Chapter Be?

Lusscroft is symbolic of our vanishing rural heritage, and holds a unique place in the Garden State's agricultural history. It embodies some of our most inspiring scenic vistas, intriguing geology and interesting topography. It has the potential for passive recreational and educational activities, allowing metropolitan day-trippers to enjoy picturesque surroundings within several hours' travel time. If its attributes

were enhanced and properly marketed, Lusscroft could become a thriving destination in the growing market for agri-tourism, eco-tourism, and heritage tourism.



What do you think?

Please tell us what you think! The complete draft of the Lusscroft General Management Plan is posted on our Web site at www.njparksandforests.org. Copies are also available by calling **1-800-843-6420**.

The Division will be accepting comments through **August 31**.

Please address your comments to:
Lusscroft General Management Plan
Office of the Director
Division of Parks & Forestry
501 East State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625



Molded cement plaque of human profile is one of several that decorate the exterior walls of the Outlook Lodge.



The Outlook Lodge was built of chestnut logs in 1930.

Alternatives To Consider

The Lusscroft draft General Management Plan assesses the significance of the resource, defines its purpose as part of the public estate, describes existing conditions, and lists visitor-experience objectives. Weighing the opportunities inherent in the site against the challenges, the draft plan offers three suggestions or alternatives for its possible future use. Public comment is an important part of the process.

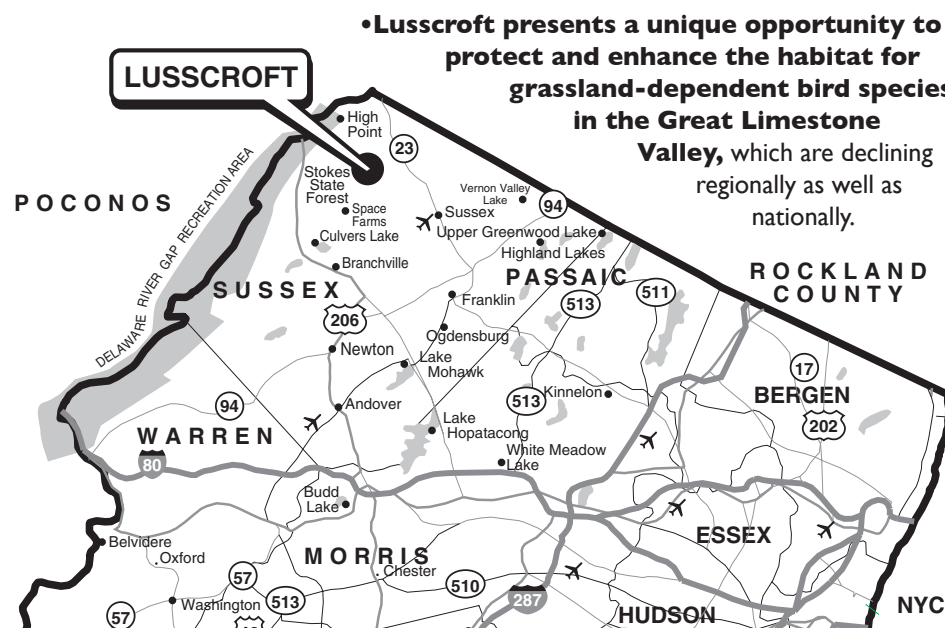
The First Alternative is the development of a rural heritage center, loosely based on the model of Shelburne Farms in Vermont, which incorporates a variety of activities and attractions sufficient to sustain a popular destination for agricultural, historical and ecological tourism. A non-profit Rural Heritage Conservancy or Agricultural Heritage Association would be established to coordinate and help fund development and management of the property. The focus would be on rural arts and heritage, agricultural history, building protection and appreciation for grassland-nesting bird habitat, heirloom breeds and plant species, and forest resources, while providing compatible passive recreational opportunities.

The Second Alternative is to make Lusscroft the office of a new state park, which would include miles of existing or proposed rail trails; approximately 20 geologic, prehistoric, historic, and Natural Heritage Priority Sites presently state-owned or otherwise recommended for acquisition; the Appalachian Trail Corridor; and Pimple Hills State Forest. While administrative offices and maintenance facilities would have to be incorporated into the planning, this would not preclude the development of a rural heritage center encompassing many of the major components envisioned in the first alternative.

The Third Alternative offers the course of “no action.” This alternative recognizes that a substantial investment is required to maintain even the status quo at Lusscroft, given existing deterioration. The “no action” alternative would result in a steady erosion and loss of historic resources, the agricultural landscape and grassland habitat. While many of the extant buildings and landscape features comprising Lusscroft are presently salvageable, they will quickly pass beyond a reasonable expectation of rescue without immediate attention.

Basic facts

- **Lusscroft encompasses 577.86 acres** in Wantage and Montague Townships, Sussex County, New Jersey. It lies along County Route 519 and Neilson Road, adjacent to High Point State Park and Stokes State Forest.
- **Adjacent to Lusscroft, Rutan Hill is geologically significant** as one of only two exposures in New Jersey of nepheline syenite, a very rare type of igneous rock. Lusscroft is the only place in New Jersey where visitors can see an extinct volcano (440 million years old) and also sedimentary rock that has been thermally altered by baking due to the high temperature of the nepheline syenite intrusion.
- **Built as a model dairy farm between 1914 and 1930** and serving as the North Jersey Dairy Branch of the State Agricultural Experiment Station between 1931 and 1970, Lusscroft uniquely preserves two fundamental stages in the revolutionary advance of scientific agriculture. In August 2000, the State Historic Preservation Office determined (HPO-H2000-71) that “the Experimental Station, including its staff housing, barns and fields, is clearly eligible for listing on the National Register for its association with the development of agricultural techniques, especially the development of artificial insemination.”
- **Located at the headwaters of the West Branch of Papakating Creek, Lusscroft falls within two Natural Heritage Priority Sites:** the Wallkill River Macrosite (B4), which contains globally rare and endangered animal species; and the Papakating Creek Natural Heritage Site (B3), which contains globally rare and endangered turtles, threatened animals and endangered plant species.



Issues and Concerns

After decades of minimal maintenance, restoring Lusscroft requires a considerable initial investment to repair, upgrade or replace its infrastructure so the public can safely enjoy its attractions. Costs for stabilization and restoration are difficult to quantify, since accurate projections will depend upon the ultimate uses of the various structures. A recent professional estimate of roof replacements and incidental repairs to the four main residences alone totaled \$318,407. Three to \$5 million over a decade is a reasonable estimate of the cost to restore Lusscroft to nationally recognized historical standards. For this reason, partnership with a non-profit agricultural heritage association would greatly facilitate fundraising, securing grants and the donation of materials and services, and securing the relevant expertise for restoration.

Such a partnership would require an agricultural lease that addresses the public interest in the property and the preservation of its agricultural, historical and ecological values, especially the habitat for grassland nesting birds.

Preservation of Lusscroft would be an investment in tourism, northwestern New Jersey's largest industry, helping to create jobs, enlarging the market for goods and services and fostering entrepreneurial opportunities for ancillary businesses. It would make efficient use of open space, promote agriculture, and deepen a sense of community and place through the educational enjoyment of historic and natural resources.



Lusscroft, the North Dairy Branch of the State Agricultural Experiment Station, in 1956.



The Manager's Dwelling incorporates the c. 1835 stone farmhouse and springhouse of Enos Brink



The Turner Mansion was built in 1916 and enlarged in 1928.